

We claim:

1. A method of converting a network address, which comprises:

on receiving a message in a communications device, checking a sender network address to determine whether a sender network address is intended for address conversion, and

if the sender network address is intended for address conversion, converting a received destination network address to a communications-device-internal network address.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the network address is an IP address.

3. The method according to claim 2, which comprises using a conversion address mask stored in a communications device to determine which parts of the destination network address need to be converted to the communications-device-internal network address.

4. The method according to claim 1, which comprises basing the checking step, as to whether address conversion is to be carried out, on a list with network addresses intended for address conversion stored in the communications device.

5. The method according to claim 1, wherein the checking step, as to whether address conversion is to be carried out, includes determining a route via which a link to the communications device has been set up.

6. The method according to claim 1, wherein the communications device is a communications system providing access to a computer network to be administered, and the method further comprises using the sender network address to identify a data processing device associated with a service center.

7. The method according to claim 6, which comprises addressing the computer network to be administered and of the devices connected to the computer network and are to be administered from the service center via a virtual network address, wherein the virtual network address uniquely identifies the computer network or the devices connected to the computer network.

8. The method according to claim 7, which comprises, for transmitting a response message from a device associated with the computer network, checking whether the network address of the data processing device associated with the service center is intended for address conversion; and

if the data processing device is intended for address conversion, converting the network address of the device connected to the computer network to a service-center-compatible virtual network address.

9. The method according to claim 8, which comprises using the conversion address mask stored in the communications device to determine which parts of the network address of the device associated with the computer network are to be converted into the service-center-compatible virtual network address.

10. The method according to claim 6, which comprises, for transmitting a response message from a device associated with the computer network, checking whether the network address of the data processing device associated with the service center is intended for address conversion; and

if the data processing device is intended for address conversion, converting the network address of the device connected to the computer network to a service-center-compatible virtual network address.

11. The method according to claim 8, which comprises using the conversion address mask stored in the communications device to determine which parts of the network address of the

device associated with the computer network are to be converted into the service-center-compatible virtual network address.